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Conference of European Statisticians

Sixty-second plenary session
Paris, 9-11 April 2014
Item 9 of the provisional agenda
Selection of topics for seminars to be held during the 2015 CES plenary session

Selection of topics for the seminars to be held during the 2015 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In March 2014, the UNECE Secretariat carried out an electronic consultation with the members of the Conference of European Statisticians on the possible topics for the seminars to be held during the 2015 plenary session of the Conference. The list of topics sent for consultation is provided as Annex I. The list has been regularly updated, based on the proposals from countries and recommendations by the Bureau. The list of seminars held since 2009 is provided as Annex II.

A total of 45 countries and international organisations replied to the consultation. They were invited to select topics for seminars and indicate whether their office would be willing to organise a seminar/session and/or prepare a paper on a specific topic.

The present note provides a summary of the replies received. Based on the outcome, the Bureau will make a proposal to the Conference for a decision on the 2015 seminar topics. The Conference will decide about the topics on 11 April 2014 under agenda item 9.

GE.14-21813

1421813

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. This year 45 countries or international organisations sent their proposals for topics to be discussed at the seminars of the 2015 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The following countries and international organizations (IOs) replied to the survey: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), Eurostat, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

2. The results of the consultation on the possible topics for 2015 CES seminars are presented in section II of this paper. The countries and organizations which offered to organize a seminar/session or to present a paper are listed under each topic.

II. Results of the survey: preferences

Topic (E) Modernisation of statistical production and services + topic (H) Managing for efficiency in statistical offices

3. The combined topic received the highest number of preferences: **27 votes** (25 from countries and 2 from IOs). As an individual topic (e) modernisation received 18 votes, and (h) managing for efficiency received 15 votes. Due to their interlinkages and close connections to the work of the High-level Group for the modernisation of statistical production and services, the Secretariat suggests combining the two topics in line with the below comment by the United States.

4. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers:

- Modernisation: Netherlands, Russian Federation, Sweden, United States (possibly).
- Efficiencies: Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation and Sweden.

Session organizers:

- Modernisation: Croatia, Hungary and the United States could possibly be willing to support the seminar organisation.
- Efficiencies: Croatia (possibly), Finland and Sweden (possibly).

5. **Comments made:**

The United States suggests merging the topic of modernisation with some of the issues listed under other topics: for example human resource issues related to managing organizational change, managing for efficiency or strategic partnerships. Furthermore, the work of the High-level Group for the modernisation of statistical production and services needs further sharing with the many countries that have not been directly involved.

Topic (F) Strategic partnerships on the way towards data revolution

6. This topic received 16 votes (15 from countries and 1 from an IO).

7. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Germany.

Session organizers: Croatia could be interested in supporting the seminar organisation.

8. **Comments made:**

Italy commented that this topic offers to statistical offices a great opportunity to deal with the issue of data revolution and possible impact on official statistics. The issue has been raised in various international contexts, for example at the last United Nations Statistical Commission in New York. Furthermore, the topic opens the door to the exchange and further steps towards partnership among countries to understand how to jointly move at European and international level taking into account current activities already carried on by CES such as the High-level Group for the modernisation of statistical production and services (HLG).

Topic (A) The response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals

9. This topic received **14 votes** (13 from countries and 1 from an IO).

10. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Sweden and Switzerland.

11. **Comments made:**

United States: The work for measuring sustainable development goals will continue to challenge all of us; statistical offices and international organisations need to share ideas about their abilities and concerns.

Topic (G) The next generation of statisticians and how do we prepare them?

12. This topic received **12 votes** (11 from countries and 1 from an IO).

13. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Canada.

Session organizer: The Russian Federation (co-organizer) and Croatia (possibly)

14. **Comments made:**

The Russian Federation: A seminar on this topic would provide a platform to discuss human resources issues, which could contribute to enhancing the in-depth expertise of national and international statistical offices as well as to improving training of experts in official statistics.

Topic (I) Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics towards difficult to measure topics

15. This topic received **11 votes** from countries.

16. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Denmark, Mexico and Turkey.

Session organizer: Finland. In addition Hungary expressed interest in being involved in supporting the seminar organisation.

Topic (J) Measuring governance

17. This topic received **7 votes** (6 from countries and 1 from IO).

18. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Mexico, Russian Federation and Sweden (possibly).

Topic (B) Climate change related statistics

19. This topic received **6 votes** from countries.

20. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Canada and Norway.

Session organizer: Norway (co-organise one seminar on topics B+D).

Topic (D) Energy statistics related to environment

21. This topic received **6 votes** from countries.

22. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Canada and Norway.

Session organizer: Norway (as a co-organizer of one seminar on topics B+D).

23. **Comments made:**

Norway: Suggest merging topics (b) "Climate change related statistics" and (d) "Energy statistics related to environment" into one seminar.

Topic (C) Gender statistics in light of Beijing+20

24. This topic received **3 votes** (2 from a country and 1 from an IO).

25. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Netherlands, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and United States (possibly).

Session organizer: The United States could possibly be willing to support the seminar organisation.

26. **Comments made:**

OECD: Gender statistics is a topic of special interest thanks to the collective efforts of international organisations and countries that have led to interesting developments in the past few years. The statistical community should take advantage of the momentum to push this agenda item forward and consolidate the results achieved into current work in a sustainable way.

United States: The statistical community should pay particular attention to gender statistics since a lot of effort will go into meeting the demands of Beijing +20.

III. Conclusions

27. The CES Bureau will discuss the results of the survey and will present a proposal to the Conference on the 2015 seminar topics. The Conference will decide about the topics on 11 April 2014 under agenda item 9.

Annex I

The following list of possible topics for the seminar at the 2015 CES plenary session was circulated to countries and international organizations for consultation:

(a) The response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Climate change related statistics;

(c) Gender statistics in light of Beijing+20;

(d) Energy statistics related to environment;

(e) Modernising statistical production and services;

(f) Strategic partnerships on the way towards data revolution;

(g) The next generation of statisticians and how do we prepare them?

(h) Managing for efficiency in statistical offices;

(i) Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics towards difficult to measure topics;

(j) Measuring governance.

Annex II

Seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians held since 2009

2009 1. Balancing principles of professional autonomy and accountability with the mandate to produce policy relevant data

2. Strategic issues in business statistics

2010 1. Spatial statistics

2. Impact of global crises on statistical systems

2011 1. Organization of data collection and sharing, and the management challenges for the implementation of SDMX

2. Measuring human capital

2012 1. Implementing the fundamental principles of official statistics, including issues related to coordination of national statistical systems

2. Challenges for future population and housing censuses (based on lessons learned from the last round)

2013 1. Challenges in implementing the system of environmental-economic accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow up to Rio+ 20

2. Challenges in providing access to micro-data for research purposes

2014 1. What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?

2. Migration statistics

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Conference of European Statisticians

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Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2015 CES plenary session

Guidelines for organising seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The note presents the updated guidelines for organising Conference of European Statisticians' seminars and templates for seminar papers and seminar outlines. The Conference of European Statisticians' Bureau discussed and approved these updated guidelines and templates in January 2014.

The note is presented to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

GE.14-20915

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I. Background

1. The 50th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2002 decided that the CES plenary sessions will be organised in three modules: a formal session and two seminars. One of the seminars focuses on foundational issues of statistical systems and the other on new emerging issues. The topics for the seminars are selected by the Conference at its annual plenary session, based on consultation with countries and a proposal by the CES Bureau.

2. The CES seminars aim at providing a forum for international collaboration for official statisticians and stakeholders. The seminars discuss topical, strategic issues of official statistics that are of particular interest to the Heads of statistical offices. One of the most important parts of the seminar is the general discussion, allowing countries and organisations to present their experiences and to brainstorm on possible ways to address common problems. Countries and international organisations are also invited to prepare papers on the seminar topics or participate in organising the seminars or sessions..

3. The purpose of these guidelines is to facilitate the work of the organisers of CES seminars. The guidelines provide instructions on the role of the various players in organising the CES seminars and important deadlines in preparing the seminars. Organisation of the CES seminars can be flexible, as different topics may require different approaches. Annex 1 of the guidelines provides a recommended template that can be used in drafting CES seminar papers.

4. The CES Bureau guides the seminar preparations. The Bureau reviews a first draft outline for the organisation of the seminars at its meeting in autumn and a final version of the outline at its meeting in spring before the CES plenary session. Annex 2 suggests a recommended template for seminar outlines that are prepared by the seminar organisers.

II. Purpose of the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

5. The purpose of the CES seminars is to:

(a) Provide an opportunity to discuss new conceptual work in depth and to explore leading-edge emerging topics;

(b) Provide an equal opportunity for all member countries and international organisations to contribute;

(c) Encourage interaction with policy makers, stakeholders and users of statistics;

(d) Serve as a basis for launching follow-up work on topical statistical issues;

(e) Promote cooperation in addressing problems together (e.g. by establishing joint Task Forces).

III. Roles for the persons involved in organising seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

A. Seminar Chair/Organiser

6. The Seminar Chair/Organiser is Head of a statistical office or his/her representative. The tasks include the following:

(a) Responsible for the overall preparation of the seminar;

(b) Decides on the number and the structure of sessions,

(c) Identifies and invites Session Organisers in collaboration with the Secretariat;

(d) Works closely with the Session Organisers, e.g. in inviting authors to prepare papers;

(e) Prepares the outline of the seminar for two Bureau meetings before the CES plenary session;

(f) Makes suggestions for and may invite a keynote speaker;

(g) Chairs the seminar at the CES plenary session, including the individual sessions;

(h) Chairs the general discussion from the floor;

(i) Ensures that the time schedule is respected;

(j) At the end of the seminar, offers clear conclusions and recommendations to the Conference for follow-up work.

B. Session Organiser

7. The Session Organiser is Head of a statistical office or his/her representative. The Session Organiser prepares the session in collaboration with the Seminar Chair. The Session Organiser is responsible for managing the discussions and focusing the session on issues of interest to the Heads of statistical offices. The tasks include the following:

(a) Responsible for the content of the session;

(b) Acts as a discussant aiming at animating the discussion and capturing the critical, substantive issues for discussion;

(c) Gives instructions to authors of papers and reviews papers in advance providing feedback to authors to ensure that the papers focus on the seminar topics.

(d) Selects papers for translation with the Seminar Chair (maximum 3 per session);

(e) Introduces the topic at the beginning of the session;

(f) Gives a presentation discussing the key points from the papers focusing on the main issues instead of covering papers one by one;

(g) Raises questions targeted to all authors and prepares questions for general discussion;

(h) At the end of the session, offers a short summary of the discussion and recommendations for follow-up work.

8. The Session Organiser should prepare the questions for authors and general discussion in advance of the CES plenary session, and share them with the Seminar Chair, the Secretariat and the authors 3 weeks before the CES seminar at the latest.

9. The presentation of the Session Organiser should:

(a) Use PowerPoint slides (maximum of 10 slides using contrasting colours);

(b) Take no more than 20 minutes;

(c) Be sent to the Secretariat 1 week before the CES seminar at the latest.

IV. Papers for the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

10. The purpose of the papers is to promote discussion of emerging issues, share good practices and point out gaps and issues that require international work. Annex 1 provides a recommended template for papers.

11. Countries and international organisations planning to contribute papers to the CES seminars should inform the ECE secretariat.

12. The Seminar Chair or a Session Organiser could prepare an issue paper to help focus the seminar. A draft issue paper could be written in the early stages of the seminar preparation to guide the Session Organisers and authors of papers to focus on the strategic topics of the seminar and the sessions. Another option would be to write an issue paper to reflect the papers provided by countries and international organisations by drawing out main points to guide the discussion at the seminar.

13. In advance of the CES plenary session, the seminar organisers will select a maximum of 3 papers per session for translation into the three United Nations official languages – English, French and Russian, and inform the authors about the deadlines. The papers to be translated need to be submitted to the Seminar Chair, Session Organiser and the Secretariat 12 weeks in advance of the CES seminar.

14. Papers that will not be translated should be submitted in English 7-8 weeks in advance of the CES seminar. Papers submitted within this deadline will be included into official United Nations document system that maintains them for public use. Furthermore, the seminar and session organisers will need enough time to analyse the papers to present the key issues at the seminar.

15. In general the papers should:

(a) Aim at raising issues and stimulating discussion;

(b) Avoid technical details;

(c) Stay concise: the papers should not be more than 6 pages long, including graphs and diagrams. Papers may exceed 6 pages if seen necessary by the Session Organiser.

16. At the CES seminar, the authors of papers may be invited by the Session Organiser to reply to specific questions. The replies of authors should be concise (1-2 minutes maximum) to allow more time for general discussion on the strategic issues raised in the papers.

V. Structure of the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

17. Each seminar lasts about one day (some time may need to be allocated to official business, such as to opening of the CES plenary session, reports from the governing bodies of CES and sometimes for discussing some topical issue of the CES work).

18. The seminars preferably contain 2-3 sessions. The seminars should conclude with concrete proposals for a way forward.

19. The timetable of the seminar should be planned in detail. The following sample timetable is indicative only. If the seminar is on the first day of the Conference, the seminar begins at 10:00 to allow for opening of the plenary session. If the seminar is on the second day of the Conference, the seminar may end at 16:00 to allow for discussing topical issues of the CES work. A 2-hour lunch breaks need to be reserved for the interpreters, and 20-30 minutes coffee/tea breaks around 11:00 and 16:00.

A sample timetable for the CES seminars

CES seminar
Introduction by Seminar Chair (5 min)
Keynote speech (15-20 min)
Session I
Introduction by Session Organiser (5 min)
Key issues identified in the papers (15 min)
Comments by authors of papers
Coffee/tea break
General discussion (40-55 min)
Short summary of the session (3-5 min)
Lunch break
Session II
Introduction by Session Organiser (5 min)
Key issues identified in the papers (15 min)
Comments by authors of papers
Coffee/tea break
General discussion (40-55 min)
Short summary of the session (3-5 min)
Session III
Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work (10 min + discussion)

20. The seminar may begin with a keynote speech delivered by a prominent person, e.g. representative of stakeholders, policy makers, users of statistics and academia. The seminars should be outward looking and invite stakeholders to engage in dialogue with the statistical community and present their expectations towards official statistics.

21. The Seminar Chair and Session Organisers can suggest their preferred approach for discussing the chosen seminar topic. It may sometimes be helpful to organise the concluding session in the form of a round table with Heads of statistical offices and other Chief statisticians capturing the strategic issues for further work. A panel discussion involving stakeholders could also be a useful approach for some sessions.

22. The seminar organisers may explore how to make use of the possibilities offered by modern technology to make the seminar more interactive, such as web-streaming, recording the discussion in video, tweeting, etc. The related costs and the simultaneous interpretation into French and Russian have to be taken into account. Any technological equipment should be well tested and a backup system should be envisaged in advance.

VI. Important deadlines

	DEADLINE
First outline of the seminar submitted to the Secretariat (for a review by the Bureau)	4 weeks before the autumn Bureau meeting
Revised outline (after comments from the Bureau)	4 weeks before the spring Bureau meeting
Submission of papers to be translated to the Secretariat	12 weeks before the CES plenary session
Submission of other papers to the Secretariat	7-8 weeks before the CES plenary session
Session Organisers send the questions they plan to raise at the seminar to the authors of papers, copy to the Secretariat	3 weeks before the CES plenary session
Session Organisers send the PowerPoint presentations to the Secretariat	1 week before the CES plenary session

Annex 1. Template for papers for the seminars of the Conference of European Statisticians

Suggested structure

1. The purpose of this suggested structure for papers is to help authors to focus their papers, and as such help Heads of statistical offices in reading the papers for seminars. The paper should be in total 6 pages long, and it should be targeted at the Heads of statistical offices. Please see below the suggested structure for the papers. It is advisable to use additional subheadings under the below headings for discussing different issues.

[Title of the paper]

Note by [name of the organisation or country]

Summary

2. This paper… [Please explain here in a summary form the focus of the paper and the motivation for addressing the topic (in maximum 70-125 words).]

3. This paper is presented to the Conference of European Statisticians seminar on… [name of the seminar] …for discussion.

I. Introduction

4. [Please introduce briefly the scope/coverage/focus of the seminar paper. This section may also touch upon the background of the topic. The introduction may also discuss the main motivation for discussing the selected topic at the CES seminar. Why is it an important topic from the viewpoint for the CES or statistical offices in general?]

II. [Description of current work or overview of the topic]

5 .[This section describes the topic in substance. It could describe the current work and latest developments related to the seminar topic.]

III. [Issues and challenges]

6. [This section highlights the main issues, challenges and findings related to the seminar topic. This is often the most informative part of the paper. Main issues and problems in the area should be described taking into consideration the interest of other international statistical offices or international organisations. The issues should be considered from a strategic and future-oriented viewpoint. The paper may make a distinction between conceptual issues, measurement issues, managerial issues, etc.]

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

7. [The paper could finish with concrete recommendations and proposals for discussion at the CES seminar. This section may also highlight plans or suggestions for future work nationally or internationally. It can also draw attention to existing statistical gaps to be dealt with.]

Annex 2. Template for outlines for seminar of the Conference of European Statisticians (prepared by the Seminar Chair and Session Organisers for review by the Bureau)

I. Background

1. At ...plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) selected the topic ... for one of the CES seminars to be held in... The organisation of the seminar will be coordinated by .... In addition ... and ... offered to organise the sessions. The seminar will be chaired by... [person]

2. [Description of the overall topic and focus of the seminar]

3. The following countries and organisations offered to contribute papers to the seminar at the CES plenary session:... Additional papers will be prepared by... The abstracts of the papers are provided in Annex 1 to this outline.

II. Structure of the seminar

4. The seminar will open with... Suggestions for the keynote speakers and topics include: [provide a list]

5. The seminar will consist of two/three sessions: the first one focusing on ..., and the second one on ... [this text may be used in the public CES provisional agenda]

6. The seminar will be organised in the form of...

7. The following technical equipment would be needed..., and could be provided by...

A. Session 1

Session Organiser:

8. The session will discuss... The discussion will focus on the following aspects: [provide a list] [this text may be used in the public CES provisional agenda]

(a)

(b)

Contributions offered (abstracts of papers are provided in the Annex):

9. Papers to be translated:

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper
-

10. Papers (not for translation):

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper
-

B. Session 2

Session Organiser:

11. The session will discuss... The discussion will focus on the following aspects: [provide a list] [this text may be used in the public CES provisional agenda]

(a)

(b)

Contributions offered (abstracts of papers are provided in the Annex):

12. Papers to be translated:

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper
-

13. Papers (not for translation):

- [Country/organisation]: name of the paper

C. Session 3

14. The concluding session will...

III. Detailed timetable for the seminar

14. [Please provide the detailed timetable e.g. using the sample timetable provided in the *Guidelines for organising CES seminars.*]

Annex to the outline: Abstracts of seminar papers

United Nations ECE/CES/2014/20

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Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Sixty-second plenary session
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda
What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?

How to add value to official statistics?

Prepared by the National Institute of Statistical and Geography of Mexico

Summary

The phenomenon of Big Data, the demand for open data and technological advances have generated new competition for official statistics and are bound to change the role of official statistics in society. Given these developments, the paper considers how to add value to official statistics and create positive user experience. It will be important to maintain the loyalty of users of official statistics and develop the value of official statistics for them.

The paper is presented for discussion to the Conference of European Statisticians seminar on "What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?".

GE.14-20430

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I. Introduction

1. During the first days of the Internet, businesses and institutions used this channel as an extension of their "business card". Institutional and corporative websites were little more than the image of the company, a declaration of principles and a contact list.

2. Later, the Internet began to be filled with content. The first to "fill" the web were those who already had a product prior to the digital age: the media, libraries, encyclopaedias, institutions. In this context, the Internet was one-directional, from providers to users, and the second group became aware of websites because they were already aware of the physical products (newspapers, institutions…). From this point, knowledge flowed in abundance as a result of the links that these Internet pioneers placed on their sites.

3. This radically changed with two extremely noteworthy events: The birth of Google and the web 2.0. It is not satisfactory to simply reach the largest possible audience via redistributors, but rather we must strive to ensure communicating directly with this audience.

4. To communicate implies basically to know how to discuss and coexist and it also allows us to understand "our place in the world"[1] and given multiple players involved in the communicative act, this process is less simple than it seems, especially when social complex actors such as diverse audiences, institutions, governments, etc. appear in the scene.

5. Consumers and users are constantly changing their selection parameters and shopping habits, institutions and enterprises have to innovate permanently in their marketing strategies.

6. The number of products in communication channels leads the way to saturation of information that causes confusion and is later translated to noise in the process of communication. It is important to understand this premise: Communication is all around, it is not possible not to communicate, and every action is communication. When an organization chooses not to communicate, what it is actually doing is negative communication, which means not really existing.[2]

7. It is safe to say that marketing and sales executives are aware that there are governmental agencies in countries who are responsible for conducting a census. Some of the more sophisticated executives might even know that these agencies also collect and disseminate data beyond basic census data, including economy, health, education, labour, agriculture information, among others. If the private sector is large enough, it might even have on staff a researcher who has more comprehensive knowledge of what governmental agencies provide.

8. National statistical offices (NSOs) have not often established powerful networking relationships with users, therefore, they need to formulate strategies to retain users by deepening the connections with them towards full interaction and feedback that allow fulfilling the mandate of official statistics. Statistical offices should better communicate that the information they provide is for users' benefit.

9. The focus is on connecting customers to the information content they need, taking into account when and how they need it. "Content" refers to everything from product

[1] *Comunicación Estratégica*, Daniel Scheinsohn, Granica, 1ª edición Buenos Aires, 2009, page. 15
[2] Ibid page 23

information to the task of delivering the content in the moment the customer needs it. Providing relevant and timely information (more real time information) requires anticipating the customer's need, fully understanding the request, delivering information when the customer needs it, and adapting swiftly when new information is asked for.

II. How to add value to the data?

10. Adding value is the way to customize a product to meet customer needs and expectations.

11. The value of data depends on the specific usefulness they provide the user with. This value is determined in a subjective and individual fashion by the user.

12. Increasing the value of data first requires generating a positive user experience.

III. How to generate a positive user experience?

13. For NSOs and users, a positive user experience would be a win-win situation. Generating a positive experience calls for continuous interaction with users of statistics to enable identifying their needs, expectations, preferences, habits and appropriate communication channels.

14. The interaction with users allows the NSOs to adjust the data supply to users' lifestyle and needs.

15. A Customer Relation Management (CRM) system could be useful in developing concrete relationships with users. It helps to recognize the value of long-lasting relationships with strategic users and user segments. Efficiently dealing with all the users and providing them what they actually need increases permanently user satisfaction.

16. A CRM system allows analysing behaviour of users of statistics. This helps to foresee user's needs effectively, focusing and concentrating on each and every user also individually – allowing personalization of service.

17. A CRM integrates the information caught through different communication channels, such as the website, social media, call centres, chat, e-mail etc., and thus support NSO in providing users with the statistics and services based on their needs. This in turn can help to generate a positive experience.

18. The phenomenon of "Big Data", the demand for "Open Data" and technological advances have generated new actors in the information industry that compete in practice with NSOs who are bound to rethink their role in the production and dissemination of statistical data.

19. Given this, the question is: How to add value to official statistics, and meet new challenges? It seems that data users, in different sectors, today and in the future will maintain their loyalty to official statistics if they discover the value it has for them. This is not easy to achieve, but there are some criteria that can help approach this goal:

A. Credibility

1. Best practices

Adoption of international best practices and techniques in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistical data.

2. Coherence in data

The use of standard concepts, classifications and target populations promotes coherence and credibility of statistical information, as does the use of common methodology across surveys. Adherence to these core dissemination principles will enhance the credibility of NSOs and build public trust in the reliability of official statistics.

3. Independence and objectivity

Information has to be presented in an objective and impartial manner, and NSOs need to be independent of any political control or influence.

B. Accessibility

1. Access for everyone

Data should be available to all users through the different communication channels.

2. Appropriate language

Language used in by NSOs should be understandable to users.

3. Timely information

Data and statistics released should be timely to be relevant.

4. Open formats

Statistics should be presented in the appropriate formats and in the right mix of channels to reinforce de message.

5. Browser compatibility

NSOs' websites must be usable across all major systems, whether it is popular browsers, mobile devices, or any other web browsing devices. It is very important to ensure that NSOs' web services can be used in any common browser.

C. Desirability

1. Attractiveness

For creating an attractive product it is necessary to focus on the color, size, lighting, and simplicity.

2. Visualization

Innovations and technological advances provide new ways to visualize data which can add value to the statistical products. Geo-referencing, dynamic graphs and apps are examples of visualizations tools.

3. Storytelling

Data and statistics should be presented so that they tell a story in an easily understood, interesting and entertaining way.

D. Usability

1. Web architecture

Website architecture should be designed to prioritize and organize information so that it facilitates the use of statistics.

2. Navigation

The navigation of the website should be as easy and fast as possible to make users stay on the website and return.

3. Intuitiveness

It is important to keep the website simple so the users do not need any kind of assistance during navigation and feel comfortable using the web services of NSOs.

4. Categorization

Categorization must have a user focus instead of a producer focus that allows user to find statistics quickly and easily.

E. Usefulness

1. Functionality

NSOs need to consider how to satisfy user´s expectations with regard to functionality of statistical products as well, especially on the website.

2. Differentiation

User segmentation according to strategic user groups may be helpful in designing statistical products and services.

3. User satisfaction

Developing products based on users' needs in order to satisfy their expectations.

4. Personalization of data

Using different technological tools to allow users to acquire the information they need according to their individual expectations and needs.

An example of such personalization could be Starbucks who has managed to differentiate its service for each customer by providing a variety of possible choices, making ordering an emotional experience by writing down thc name of each consumer in cups, and afterwards recognizing frequent customers, engaging in a conversation with them and remembering their names and recognizing their individual tastes and preferences.

F. Easy to find

1. Search engine

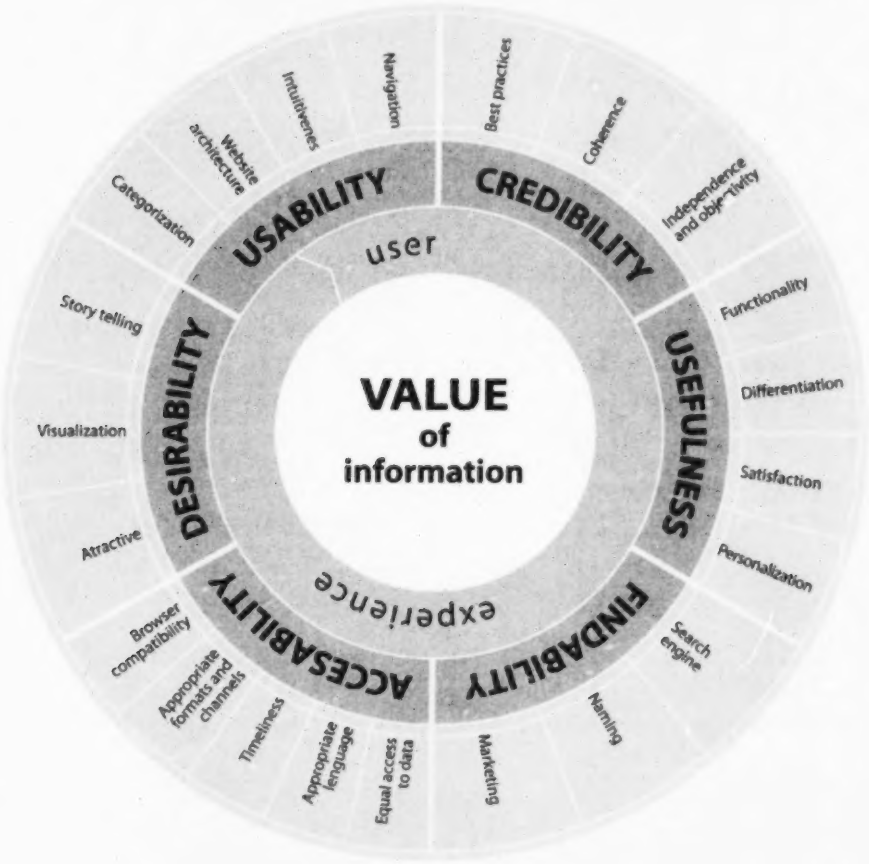
Users should find the statistics they are looking on the website in a fast and simple way e.g. using search engines.

2. Easy naming

The names of products should be attractive and give an idea of what the product contains and what they are for, so as to facilitate the search for users.

3. Marketing campaigns

Creating brand positioning strategies and techniques focused on the different user segments which enable presenting NSOs' products and services as well as the communication channels used.



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What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?

What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?

Prepared by the National Institute of Statistics Romania*

Summary

The paper discusses how to distinguish "official statistics" from statistics in general and from other official data and information. It considers the boundaries of official statistics and proposes criteria that should be met to qualify for the label "official statistics".

The paper is presented for discussion to the Conference of European Statisticians seminar on "What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?"

* This document was submitted late due to the late submission of paper from the National Institute of Statistics.

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I. Background

1. Albert Einstein has said: "*Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.*" This aphorism was not meant to colour the text, but we believe it corresponds, in a particular way, to the topic which will be discussed during the seminar. By paraphrasing this sentence, another aphorism can be derived: *"Not any statistics is official statistics and not any official statement that contains a numerical expression is statistics".*

2. As to the above statements, the following question arises: *"If not all statistics are official statistics, then what does official statistics mean and where does this special brand of statistics come from?"*

3. On the other hand, if not any official statement that contains a numerical expression on a certain economic or social phenomenon is statistics, then what kind of meaning does it have?

4. For better understanding the message behind the statements, let us consider some examples.

5. Unemployment is measured in two ways. One indicator represents the registered unemployment, released by the Ministry of Labour. This indicator is compiled in a specific manner where the administrative considerations prevail against those requiring statistical quality. It depends on the legislation in force in every country and on the conditions imposed by law. The second indicator that measures unemployment is based on statistical methodology and Labour Force Surveys (LFS).

6. The following question arises: "While the unemployment based on LFS is official statistics meeting all the required quality criteria, is the registered unemployment official statistics as well, without relying on all the quality elements and being based on other criteria?" The answer is, by far, not clear.

7. Let us take another example. In Romania, data on prognoses and forecasting are produced by an institution called the National Commission for Prognosis whose estimates are based on statistical data. The prospective data on short, medium and long term, elaborated and published by the above said institution are official data. However, in the authors' opinion, they are not official statistics. Nevertheless, there are statistical institutions in Europe that make such forecasts. If this is the case, do these data assume the status of "official statistics"?

II. A slightly different approach

8. It is generally known that, with a well-defined purpose in mind, political decision-makers often resort to a statistical estimate (usually positive) of economic growth, such as "*we expect an economic growth of over 2.5% by the end of this year*". This is accompanied by a warning "*let us, however, wait for the official figures of the National Statistics Institute (NSI)*". Such a statement from a politician contains two essential elements: firstly, the "estimate" announced by the politician is rather a wish, possibly a perception, based on previous real data, or on statistical elements and inputs that he does not refer to and which we will never know. Does the figure pronounced by the politician belong to statistics? Does it belong to official statistics? We shall let you consider that.

9. The second element contained in the politician's statement is by far the most important one since it points out the authority of the National Statistical Institute, as

producer of official statistics, implicitly recognising the professional independence of the NSI.

III. Private statistics could, in turn, be official?

10. A notable Romanian researcher conducted an exceptionally valuable and comprehensive study on which he has worked for over 30 years. This two-volume work of more than 1000 pages aimed to determine Romania's Gross Domestic Product over a rather long period, 1862-2010. The study includes three categories of data: (1) official statistical data for 1990-2010 taken from the publications of the National Institute of Statistics; (2) data for the planned economy period which the researcher calculated by converting the data from the Material Production System to the System of Accounts; and (3) data for the period prior to 1945, which were obtained based on original scientific models. These gave the results at least the value of reasonable estimates, difficult to contradict without conducting a similar exercise. Are the statistical data of the GDP series for the entire period official statistics? Are they exclusively statistics? Or are they a combination between official and unofficial statistical data?

11. Under such hypotheses, the perception would be that we are not dealing with official historical statistical data but with data that can be useful to some categories of users, particularly researchers, and to some others who need retrospective data for long time periods. In the meantime, we can pose a question: if a similar study had been conducted by the National Institute of Statistics, would it have been interpreted the same way or would it have had, through the institution it originated from, the status of official statistics?

IV. Statistics in general versus official statistics

12. The paper does not aim to define statistics. This would be far too ambitious and would take too much space. But we believe that the definition of official statistics is a topical issue which needs to be dealt with. It becomes even more obvious today when the task of producing official statistics does not belong exclusively to one institution, even when it is a National Institute of Statistics. In history as well as in the relatively near past, official statistics was only the responsibility of the national statistical office. There were two reasons for this. First, the aim of statistics originating from "the State" was to serve the state in administrating its economic and social affairs, environmental protection, etc. Second, the national statistical office had almost full monopoly over this area, considering that other institutions with an interest in statistics in general and in official statistics in particular did not exist or were limited in number.

13. Nowadays, the generally recognised producers of official statistics are the national statistical offices and the national central banks that justify this qualification due to tradition and recognition. Alongside, another category of producers of (implicitly official) statistics emerged. This was due to the specific nature of the data that only these institutions could produce or as a result of the national statistical institutes not being able to meet all the needs for statistical information, including official information, through their own resources.

V. Defining the boundaries of official statistics

14. Under these circumstances, a series of questions arose aiming to define the boundaries of official statistics as clearly as possible. The resulting answers would tell us who the producers of official statistics are, what criteria statistics should meet to have the status of "official statistics", who is entitled to give this "brand" to the statistics produced

by various authorities and agencies, how to get the "official statistics" status accepted by society, how intense should be the shift from the statistics to official statistics, etc.

15. Here we can add events that we expect to occur in the statistical system, such as those related to the improvement of technological performance, an increased use of administrative sources, the use of open and big data, etc.

VI. Testing the opinion of users

16. The President of the National Institute of Statistics of Romania has initiated a periodic dialogue with mass-media representatives, particularly journalists from news agencies, radio and TV stations, aiming to get feedback from this category of users, improve the image of the NSI and increase the credibility of the Institute. On this occasion, specific issues are discussed concerning their degree of satisfaction with the official statistical data produced and disseminated by the NSI. The journalists are asked for opinions on some of the major actions carried out by the NSI (i.e. the Population and Housing Census, the Agricultural Census, etc.), their point of view about the quality of statistical indicators in general, with a focus on sensitive indicators, such as the GDP, the Consumer Price Index, unemployment, the industrial production index, indicators on the level of salaries and pensions, living conditions, etc.

17. Recently, with a view to producing this paper, issues related to their view on official statistics have also been discussed.

18. To the questions they were asked, journalists responded as follows:

(a) A large majority of the journalists (over 95%) considered the data produced by the National Institute of Statistics as official data. Some concerns about the quality of these data were also expressed, suggesting, for instance, that in terms of perception, improvements should be made to the Consumer Price Index and other indicators on living conditions;

(b) In the category of "other institutions that produce official statistics" the journalists included the National Bank of Romania, as well as public administration institutions. In this context, they pointed out that, if a certain indicator is produced by several institutions, among which the INS, the official data are the ones of the INS, and the other data are merely statistical data based on own calculations, which are meant to serve these institutions' internal management purposes;

(c) The journalists also expressed the idea that, to be official, statistics should meet strict quality and coverage criteria and should be based on methodologies in compliance with international standards (approximately 54%). The remaining 44% refrained from answering this question.

VII. How could we define and strengthen the term "official statistics"?

19. Summarising the statements and examples presented, we tried to frame, or rather delineate the scope of official statistics from statistics in general and from administrative sources. The latter can be taken as such for statistical purposes, or may need special processing to "clean" the elements that do not meet the quality requirements of official statistics. In this respect, we considered possible alternatives that could be the basis of official statistics:

A. Defining the official statistics according to the data producer

20. The following are hereby envisaged:

(a) Institutions that qualify by right as producers of official statistics and are de facto recognised, their main activity being the production of official statistical data - central statistical offices that are also the coordinators of national statistical systems;

(b) Institutions which have a strong statistical component although the production of statistics is not their main activity (National Central Banks, the Ministry of Justice for crime statistics, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, etc., other public authorities and institutions, national and local agencies that produce data exclusively for certain areas, non-governmental agencies, professional associations, etc.);

(c) Research or academic institutions that are compiling statistics either independently or together with government agencies;

(d) Institutions that are drawing up statistical papers intended for official statistics, based on contracts, on behalf of a central public institution, typically the National Statistical Office.

21. In an early stage, Eurostat and the draft amendments to the law of European statistics (Regulation 223) entailed, for the EU Member States, a clear distinction between national statistical offices and other producers of European official statistics. The Member States have communicated, based on certain criteria suggested by Eurostat, the lists of other official statistics producers. These lists are posted on the Eurostat website.

22. If the data produced at the national level by countries and submitted to the Commission for the compilation of European statistics are both official statistics, this fact should be reflected also in the national legislation. As a result, Romania needed to improve the statistical law. Therefore, we have recently submitted to the Government the following text: "the official statistics producers are: the National Institute of Statistics and the National Bank of Romania, each of them for the own competence area, as well as and other producers of official statistics; other producers of official statistics can be the public authorities and institutions that develop, produce and disseminate, under the INS coordination, in compliance with the European Code of Practice, official statistical data mentioned in the National Statistical Programme. The list of official statistics producers from Romania, intended to be submitted to the European Commission, is updated and communicated by the INS, as coordinator of official statistics in Romania and the unique contact point with the Commission (Eurostat)".

B. Official statistics determined in terms of importance for all user categories

23. Such an alternative would allow to promote the envisaged data as official statistics. This approach has some pros and cons. The advantages would be related to the fact that official statistics could be defined in terms of data and leading indicators, first of all as the basis for macro and micro economic decisions, among which are many decisions taken at international and national level. This would also include the categories of indicators defined at international level, such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Stiglitz Report, etc.

24. The disadvantages would be those related to the difficulties of covering all indicators that have the features of official statistics, but are either details of the indicators from the first category or have just a national, regional or local importance.

C. Official statistics from the perspective of exclusive links with governmental needs, including all institutions of central and local administrations

25. The advantage of this approach would be that the term "official" would be linked to the State administration. It is, however, easily understandable that this would exclude from official statistics the data meeting the requirements of all other user categories that also would like to use the official statistics.

VIII. Criteria suggested to be met by statistics to qualify for the status of official statistics

26. The current state of art requires new definition / redefinition of criteria for considering the role, contents and coverage of official statistics. Among these, the following preliminary criteria and limits of official statistics could be envisaged:

(a) De facto recognition of a statistical product as being generated to serve the entire spectrum of the society, that means all the categories of users of statistics;

(b) The products should be based on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the related quality criteria, for example, the European Statistics Code of Practice;

(c) The official statistics governance should be based on a sufficiently strong provision of the law, allowing for its professional independence and recognition of its role and importance as a fundamental pillar of the society;

(d) Identification of the official statistics products under a unitary, coherent and logical coordination of a centre with well-defined position as official statistics state body in a democratic state, i.e. usually the national statistical office;

(e) Ensuring consistency and congruence, transparency and visibility of the official statistics process while ensuring confidentiality of individual information;

(f) Identifying the most adequate systems of involving producers of official statistics in the process of inter-institutional collaboration and ensuring citizens' unrestricted access to information.

IX. Who and on what basis is entitled to assign the official statistics "brand" to statistics produced by various agencies

27. First, we should answer the question "Is a validation and certification required to be assigned by someone or something?" The concerted actions at European level suggest that, in principle, assigning the official statistics brand to certain statistics or to certain official statistics producers is needed. In this case, the only institution entitled to take this role is the one defined as the coordinator of official statistics, i.e. the NSI.

28. This may also involve some other bodies, e.g. Statistical Councils. Their function would be to involve the statistical data producers in the statistical circle and to include them in statistical programmes. The official statistics brand would follow since, once included in the programme, the statistical data producers and their activities would be subordinated to the basic criteria included in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Code of Practice, as well as to other norms governing the statistical process, thus assigning them the fundamental society pillar status and the official statistics brand.

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What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?

How do we define the value and benefits of official statistics in an increasingly competitive data industry?

Prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics*

Summary

The paper introduces the concept of value proposition for official statistics. The purpose of defining a value proposition would be to better communicate, and gain recognition for the value that official statistics deliver to governments and the broader community. As such, a value proposition could be helpful in maintaining support for national statistical offices in challenging times, as well as be a tool that can help statisticians to grow their business.

The paper is presented for discussion to the Conference of European Statisticians seminar on "What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?"

* This document was submitted late due to the late submission from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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I. Background and context

1. The mission of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service. This mission statement, which emphasises the key role that high quality official statistics play in public decision making, draws on the legislated functions of the ABS as set out in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Act. These functions are to:

(a) Operate as the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and provide services for the state governments;

(b) Collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;

(c) Coordinate the statistical operations of official bodies;

(d) Develop standards for statistics and ensure they are used;

(e) Give advice and assistance to official bodies on the production and use of statistics;

(f) Liaise with international organisations on statistical issues.

2. The ABS has a set of values that underpins its work as Australia's national statistical agency. These values are integrity, trust of providers, relevance, professionalism, access for all and service. These values are drawn from the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

3. It is considered that there are two key foundations of the ABS brand, integrity and quality. In regard to integrity, as a statutory authority that is headed by an independent Australian Statistician, the ABS has been set apart from government to provide statistics 'without fear or favour'. Because of this, users can be confident in the credibility of the statistics, and public policy discussions can be based on the merits of ideas and not on questioning the underlying evidence.

4. In regard to quality, the ABS, like most national statistical agencies, has significant powers to collect statistical information, which have been provided to it by the Australian Parliament. These powers, although rarely used to their fullest extent, are critical to the ABS being able to produce statistics of sufficient quality to inform critical decisions. However, these powers have not been granted lightly by Parliament. Parliament has also imposed strict obligations on the ABS to maintain the confidentiality of information provided to it, so that the community can trust in the organisation and report accurately. Taken together, the powers of collection and the supporting confidentiality obligations ensure that the ABS is able to produce statistics of a quality that cannot be matched by any other organisation in Australia, public or private.

5. The public good nature of official statistics, and the importance of quality and integrity as reflected in the ABS values, are well understood by those working in official statistics; indeed they are often promoted passionately and any challenge to them vigorously defended. However, 'outsiders' who are less steeped in the traditions of official statistics sometimes struggle to understand their importance. This can be of critical concern if these 'outsiders' play a key role in determining the funding of the national statistical office – either through appropriation or user funding, or if they are key users of the national statistical offices outputs; or if they are influential in determining government policies that impact on an national statistical office. While the independence of the national statistical office provides some protection to decisions that may affect it from having negative

impacts, the reality is that national statistical offices cannot fully separate themselves from the governments that create them and are generally critically dependent on governments for funding. Even legislative protections are ultimately provided at the pleasure of the Parliament and an ongoing appreciation of the essential characteristics of official statistics by Parliament is essential for maintaining these protections.

6. Even if a statistical agency is not under threat from budget process or otherwise, a lack of understanding of the value that it provides can mean that opportunities to broaden its activities to better fulfil its mission may be missed. There is not a statistical agency that, if it had additional resources, could not usefully use these resources to expand its work program to provide a better evidence base for public decision making. This situation is exacerbated if there are other potential providers – either public or private – of statistics. Of course, there is legitimate role for these providers but if resources are being allocated to them because there is limited understanding of the true value that is provided by the national statistical office then there will be a less-than-optimal use of resources. Decisions to allocate resources are taken on the basis of what is perceived, which may or may not accord with reality. It is critical that national statistical offices actively work to close any gap that might exist between perception and reality that have a detrimental effect on the national statistical office's ability to win its 'right' share of business.

7. While the ABS has a long history of support from Australian governments and the broader community, we are finding that in the current environment we need to work harder to convince critical stakeholders of our value. Technological advances have eroded the 'natural monopoly' that has been traditionally enjoyed by national statistical offices by making it easier for others to produce statistics. An ever increasing demand for information, both in terms of breadth and depth, to inform increasingly complicated policy issues, a desire for more and more timely information, and a strong focus on costs have placed national statistical offices such as the ABS under increasing pressure, with decision makers more likely to consider alternatives. Common complaints against the ABS are that we are 'too expensive', or 'too slow', or 'too fixated on methodological purity at the expense of responsiveness', or that we 'lock-up too much information'. While a national statistical agency must ensure that its activities are as timely and cost-effective as they can be, that quality is sufficient for the purpose to which the statistics are used, and that data are made as widely available as possible while still respecting confidentiality, comments such as the ones above more often than not reflect a lack of appreciation of the value of official statistics produced by a national statistical agency.

8. If it is not careful, a national statistical office can react to such criticisms in a way that can appear defensive or precious to 'outsiders'. One way that this can occur is by using language that resonates with us, but comes across as not being in tune with the needs of the 'real world'. Our values are critically important, but by simply reciting our values as a justification for the way we do business can often alienate critical stakeholders, including those who can influence the budgets of a national statistical office or the environment in which we operate. At the ABS, we have decided that we need to be better in explaining how our values benefit governments and the broader community, rather than the values being seen as something that are of benefit to the ABS itself. In doing so, we need to remember that our values are means to an end – better decision making through better official statistics – and that this means being better in articulating why they should matter outside the ABS. In other words, we need to better bridge our internal view of the ABS and what is important to us, and what the external world is after. And this needs to be backed up by demonstrable, concrete, action so that our words are not simply hollow.

II. Towards a value proposition

9. With this context in mind, there has been discussion in various ABS senior executive forums about developing an ABS 'value proposition'. The purpose of such a value proposition would be to better communicate, and gain recognition for, the value that we deliver to Australian governments and the broader community. As such, a value proposition could be helpful in maintaining support for the ABS in challenging times, as well as be a tool that can help us to grow our business.

10. In the past twelve months, the idea of a value proposition has been explored within the Population, Labour and Social Statistics (PLaSS) Group in the ABS. The objective of this work has been to develop a value proposition for PLaSS, with the view that this work could be of benefit to the development of a broader ABS value proposition. There has been extensive discussion within the Group about what form the value proposition should take, and what the content should be. While further work is needed to complete the PLaSS value proposition, it has been agreed that it would be comprised of the value proposition itself, which would be supported by a service offering and examples of the value proposition in action.

11. The heart of the PLaSS value proposition is a set of statements that describes PLaSS's 'favourable points of difference', which are those areas of advantage that set us apart from our competitors. The underlying 'value creation logic' is that we distinguish ourselves from others by ensuring trust in our relationship with our clients that allows them to rely on the quality and integrity of our products and services for effective decision making. The set of statements has two columns. The first contains assertions about the nature of our competitive advantage. The second column describes the benefit that our clients receive from working with PLaSS. This two-way approach is considered important as it provides a bridge between how we typically think of ourselves and how we can explain this in a way that resonates with our clients. Appendix A provides the near final version of the value proposition.

12. We are still working on the supporting components – the service offering and the examples of the value proposition in action. The service offering will provide a high-level overview of the types of products and services that PLaSS offers. It will encourage clients to not only think about us in terms of the statistics that we produce, or could produce, but how we can add value through the other services that we provide, or could provide. A framework that could be used to present the service offering is the legislated functions of the ABS as set out in the ABS Act. The examples of the value proposition in action will be used to demonstrate to clients that the assertions that are made in the value proposition are in fact supported by evidence. We are in the process of gathering relevant examples.

13. We have also considered how we would actually use the value proposition and the supporting components. At minimum, these would be used by the PLaSS Executive and managers in their discussions with clients, enabling us to speak with confidence and consistency about what we offer and presenting this in a way that resonates with clients. We also want to consider turning the value proposition and the service offering into documents that could be provided to clients (and made available more generally on the ABS website) so that our value proposition endures in their minds.

14. In developing the PLaSS value proposition, we have discovered that the journey is almost as important as the destination. We have deliberately involved a wide group of staff in the work. There has been extensive discussion about how we add value in our work. This has led to a strong coalescence around the things that are important, and a sheared understanding of how we can communicate this in a way that better resonates with our stakeholders. Although the work on developing the value proposition has not been

completed, we are already seeing our staff engaging more confidently with clients with a consistent approach. Because we are actively seeking to explain our position in a way that better resonates with our clients, we are finding that our ability to influence their thinking is increasing and that we are getting better 'buy-in' from them. We are also hearing that we are less 'stuck in our ways' – even though our underlying values have not changed – and more willing to listen.

15. The PLaSS work has been put forward as a starting point for developing a broader ABS value proposition. This has been accepted by the ABS senior executive, and work will shortly commence. We are aiming to have the work completed by the middle of 2014. We are also intending to expose this work to the Australian Statistical Advisory Council to seek its feedback.

Annex

Draft value proposition of the population, labour and social statistics

Our purpose

We exist to achieve better lives for Australians, through effective social policy and decisions that are based on statistics that are timely, relevant and cost effective, underpinned by the ABS's brand of integrity and quality

Our vision

We aspire to be the pre-eminent leader of a comprehensive set of statistics on the well-being of Australians, delivering information people need when they need it

Our value proposition	What this means for our clients
We are independent.	Our services can be used with the confidence that their integrity will not be challenged.
We are trusted, authoritative and apolitical	Confident decisions can be made about the things that are important to Australians.
Our work is of high quality	Clients can have an individual relationship with us that meets their particular needs.
Our statistics are relevant, reliable, consistent, comparable	We can inform on the breadth and depth of the lives and living conditions of Australians.
Our services are customisable	We provide the big picture for Australia, and we also can break it down into areas and populations of interest.
We are flexible, responsive and supportive	We can deal with complex, multidimensional, inter-temporal and emerging societal concerns
We have expertise across a comprehensive range of statistical subjects	Our statistics are accurate because they are compiled using provider data that is of high quality.
We are national, and scalable	We have access to data that is not available to others.
We can inform on outcomes, outputs and inputs in an integrated way	We do not lock things up from users. Users can get what they need, and so can their stakeholders.
We are trusted by our providers, because we protect the confidentiality of their information	Users can be assured that ABS services are based on world's best practice, and that nothing is hidden.